



4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program

Project Overview

What is the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program?

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program is an education and training program for youth workers. Through a structured apprenticeship program, which includes Related Instruction and On-the-Job Learning (OJL), youth practitioners develop the skills they need to effectively serve youth in their communities. This program, sponsored by National 4-H Headquarters, targets frontline practitioners who deliver comprehensive services to youth. The goals of the program include: 1) Provide training standards for the youth development practitioner occupation; 2) Increase the number of youth workers receiving extensive, quality training; 3) Increase retention for both youth workers and youth programs; 4) Provide training and mentoring opportunities; 5) Provide a career path; and 6) Provide national recognition for successful completion of the apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeship program is intended to strengthen the field of youth work and improve service delivery through quality training opportunities for youth practitioners.

Importance of Apprenticeships

Success in delivering comprehensive services to youth depends not only on the quality of the program design, but also on the delivery of services to youth by frontline staff. Because youth services are designed and governed at the local level and implemented by frontline youth workers, the role of youth workers is critical as they develop relationships with young people and provide crucial expertise and support to youth as they transition to adulthood and careers. Therefore, the long-term success of youth programs requires a human capital strategy. We are seeking to upgrade the field of youth work through accreditation, training opportunities, apprenticeship, and certification.

Through apprenticeship, we have the opportunity to systematically examine the needs of the field and then address those needs in a structured way that represents the field's own expertise. Quality and adaptability characterize apprenticeship and thus provide a good match for the diverse landscape of youth programs.

Components of the Apprenticeships

Related Instruction: Apprentices will participate in educational experiences (trainings, workshops, courses) based on core competencies for youth development professionals. These core competencies are based on feedback received from the field of youth development to the Department of Labor and the *4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competency Model* (2004). The total required number of hours of Related Instruction is 345.

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On-the-Job Learning: The On-the-Job Learning (OJL) is intended to supplement the instruction requirements. Apprentices are required to complete 3000-4000 hours of OJL in order to be certified. During OJL, Apprentices will demonstrate their professional knowledge in several areas, including program design and delivery, assessment and individual planning, and communication with youth, the community, and employers.

Upon the completion of both OJL and Related Instruction, Apprentices can be certified by the state and the federal Department of Labor as a Youth Practitioner Journeyworker. Apprenticeships typically require 2-3 years to complete.

Master Practitioners: In the Apprenticeship Program, Master Practitioners will be recruited to work with Apprentices, one-on-one. Apprentices can expect to spend a minimum of one hour per week with their Master Practitioner via phone, email or in face-to-face meetings. The role of the Master Practitioner is to support and assist in the development of the Apprentice's professional development plan and career in youth development, provide experience-based advice and serve as a supervisor to the Apprentice in the program.

Participation in the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program

Apprentices and Master Practitioners will be recruited through their state land-grant institution, state 4-H Associations and/or the state 4-H Youth Development program.

For more information contact:

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